

distinct characters of Mary, all written at different times : his original narrative,¹ the versions in his History,² and his Essay on the Memory of the Late Queen. All are highly eulogistic, as the writer himself recognised : ' I am sensible I have not set faults or defects enough in opposition to all the Princess's virtues ; but I protest I have taken all the pains I could to seek for them/ ³

Burnet's description of her attainments and manner of living is based on personal knowledge. In his Essay he gives particulars, not found in the History, that relate mainly to the period after her accession. After stating that she gave 'the most of her hours to the study of the Scriptures, and of books relating to them/ he proceeds :

Next to the best subjects, she bestowed most of her time on books of history, chiefly of the later ages, particularly those of her own kingdoms, as being the most proper to give her useful instruction. Lively books, where wit and reason gave the mind a true entertainment, had much of her time. She was a good judge as well as a great lover of poetry : she loved it best when it dwelt on the best subjects. So tender she was of poetry, tho' much more of vertue, that she had a particular concern in the defilement or rather the prostitution of the muses among us. She made some steps to the understanding philosophy and mathematicks, but she stopped soon; only she went far in natural history and perspective, as she was very exact in geography. She

thought sublime things were too high flights
for the sex ;
which she oft talked of, with a liberty, that was
very lively :
but she might well be familiar with it, after
she had given
so effectual a demonstration of the
improvements it was
capable of. Upon the whole matter, she
studied and read

¹Supplement, ed. Foxcroft, pp. 194-6. This section was
written in 1686-7
(p. 190, n. i).

²i. 690 ; ii. 133-4, r37-8. Revised 1702-4.

³Supplement, p. 195.